

**P032 Diocese of Moosonee Synod Office fonds  
1848-2018**

**36 linear meters of textual records, architectural drawings, photographic records,  
and artifacts**

**Administrative History:** Founded in 1872, the Anglican Diocese of Moosonee encompasses the James Bay, south of Hudson Bay, and surrounding areas in Northern Ontario and northwestern Quebec. James Bay area communities were considered part of the Diocese of Rupert's Land, founded in 1849, until 1872. The Diocese of Moosonee was overseen as part of the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land from 1875 until 1912 when it became part of the newly created Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario.

On Moose Factory Island and surrounding areas now considered part of the Diocese of Moosonee, early missionary services were carried out by the English Wesleyan Society under Reverend George Barnley from the year 1840 until the arrival of the Anglican missionary John Horden in 1851. Horden was sent to the Moose Factory HBC post by the Church Missionary Society (CMS) in order to minister to both the Aboriginal community there and the European residents alike. He arrived with his wife Elizabeth from Exeter, England, and was ordained deacon and priest by the Bishop of Rupert's Land in 1852, due in large part to his success within the Moose Factory community. Horden established a day school early on and a small mission school in 1855 while translating religious works into Cree. Horden was ordained at Westminster Abbey as the first Bishop of the newly established Diocese of Moosonee in 1872. This meant that the size of the Diocese of Rupert's Land shrank in 1872 with the creation of the Diocese of Moosonee and then shrank further in 1873 with the creation of the Diocese of Athabasca. Under Bishop Jervois Newnham, the second Bishop of the Diocese of Moosonee, hospital services were brought to Moose Factory, and the Bishop's wife was influential in enticing the first nurse to become a permanent resident on the island. Under the third Bishop, George Holmes, the Episcopal Residence was moved from St. Thomas, Moose Factory, to St. John's, Chapleau, in 1905, due in large part to the fact that the community was reachable by railroad. Expanding railroad service was a product of the rising industrial viability of many communities within the region, and this provided the Bishop and those visiting Chapleau access to the community year-round. The fourth Bishop, John G. Anderson, presided from 1909 until 1943 and oversaw the first Synod, which took place on May 14 and 15, 1919. This period saw an expanded effort to establish what were then called "white missions," missions that catered primarily to European immigrant populations in the more southern parts of the Diocese. At this time, parishes that catered to Aboriginal populations were considered to be thriving. As Moosonee was a Missionary Diocese, financial solvency was always a central administrative issue, and in 1920 the CMS transferred the last of its financial obligations to the Missionary Society of the Church in Canada (MSCC). During the inter-war years, a proactive approach to Anglican ministry was propelled by the Anglican Forward Movement, and the Diocese of Moosonee was partly funded by these efforts. Under Bishop Anderson the See-House, the Bishop's primary residence, was moved again, this time from Chapleau to Cochrane. In 1928, the Diocese was also divided into three Rural Deaneries: the southern deanery of Chapleau, the central deanery of Cochrane, and the northern deanery of Moosonee. With the establishment of the Diocese of the Arctic in 1933 under Bishop Archibald Fleming, the northern-most boundary of the Diocese of Moosonee was reduced to cover only the south and west-coast of the James Bay. The Diocese of the Arctic

contained ministries that catered almost exclusively to Inuit communities.

Between the 1920s and 1940s, a mining industry boom in northern Ontario and Quebec resulted in an influx of residents to newly established communities. Many Anglican parishes sprouted up to cater to these new residents within the Diocese of Moosonee, notably in Noranda and Bourlamaque. The community of Moosonee, located on the mainland across the Moose River from Moose Factory Island, was reachable by railway in 1932, and the community became the predominant distribution center for the southern James Bay. The fifth Bishop of the Diocese, Robert Renison, took over in 1943, and a sub-section of the Diocese's northern communities were placed under the oversight of Reverend Neville Clarke in 1951. As Suffragan Bishop of James Bay, Clarke was in charge of all Aboriginal ministries in the James Bay Area, which was equivalent to the northern deanery of the Diocese of Moosonee. Under Bishop Renison, Schumacher, a neighboring mission to Timmins, became an independent parish, and the Bishop's residence, formally named Bishopstope, was founded at Schumacher in 1946. The move placed the Bishop in a more centralized location; this helped him to reach the various, geographically disparate parishes across the Diocese including the now growing southern industrial communities. On November 30, 1947, the newly constructed St. Matthew's church in Timmins was consecrated as the Diocesan Pro-Cathedral. It has remained there since.

Under the oversight of the MSCC and the Residential School Commission, the Diocese managed three Indian Residential Schools within its boundaries: the Bishop Horden Memorial School in Moose Factory, St. John's School in Chapleau, and St. Philip's in Fort George. The Moose Factory School took students in as early as 1905, after the formal signing of Treaty No. 9. Throughout its history, the Diocese has consisted primarily of Aboriginal parishioners, and the population of First Nations, Inuit, and Métis residents that make up communities found within the Diocese reaches to upwards of 85%. By the 1960s, with educational changes in both Ontario and Quebec, as well as changes in the status of Aboriginal peoples throughout Canada, the Diocese evolved to try and better accommodate its parishioners. Continued emphasis on industrial development in the north during the last half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century has had a sustained impact on the Diocese's ministerial perspective across the diverse communities of northern Ontario and Quebec. In 2014, the Diocese became a Mission of the Ecclesiastical Province of Ontario overseen by Archbishop Colin Johnson, Metropolitan of Ontario.

Over the course of the administrative history of the Diocese of Moosonee, its territorial boundaries have changed often. When the Diocese was established in 1872, it encompassed much of northern Ontario and included almost 300 square miles of territory. Originally surrounding the shores of the entire Hudson Bay, the Diocese had no clearly defined northern boundary, although it has never reached further south than the Town of Chapleau, Ontario. In the early years of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century, missionaries travelled as far north as Pond Inlet and Ellesmere Island. When the Diocese of Moosonee was carved out of the Diocese of Rupert's Land's territory, Moosonee held parts of modern Manitoba and Nunavut within its boundaries to the west and parts of northern Quebec to the east. In 1883, the boundaries were changed in order to reflect the newly created map of Canada. With the formation of the Diocese of Keewatin in 1902, Moosonee's western boundary receded eastward by almost half, yet continued to include all of the area surrounding the James Bay. In 1933, the north-eastern-most portion of the Diocese of Moosonee, including the community of Fort George on the east coast of the James Bay,

became a part of the newly founded Diocese of the Arctic. While Fort George remained geographically within the boundaries of the Diocese of the Arctic, episcopal oversight and administrative responsibilities were officially returned to the Diocese of Moosonee in 1959. In 1947, the Diocese of Moosonee absorbed a portion of the Diocese of Montreal's western border including the county of Temiskaming and the Abitibi region. In that same year, the bordering Dioceses of Algoma and Moosonee shifted territorial boundaries: the parish of Chapleau became part of the Diocese of Algoma; and Kirkland Lake, Swastika, and the district of Virginiatown became part of the Diocese of Moosonee. Chapleau would remain a part of the Diocese of Algoma until 1992, when territorial boundaries shifted once again, and the community was reabsorbed by the Diocese of Moosonee. The modern boundary of the Diocese stretches to the town of Chapleau, Ontario, to the south, Collins to the west, and Kashechewan to the northern-west, covering all of the southern James Bay and reaching as far north-east as Chisasibi, formerly Fort George. Furthermore, the Diocese of Moosonee's boundary stretches to Mistissini in the east and Val D'Or in the south-east of Quebec.

**Scope and Content:** The Diocese of Moosonee Synod Office fonds attests to the work of the administrative body that oversees Anglican missionaries and clergy within the Diocese of Moosonee. The fonds focuses on the James Bay area in northern Ontario and north-western Quebec, although records document the growing importance of communities south of the James Bay over the course of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century. Early records document the work of Anglican missionaries such as John Horden, Thomas Vincent, James Edmond Peck, and G.W. Walton in communities such as Moose Factory, Fort George, and Fort Albany. Missionary accounts of the harsh climate and difficulties navigating the northern terrain are coupled with accounts of religious ceremonies and interactions between clergy and European settlers employed by the HBC in the fur-trade and other industries, as well as interactions with Aboriginal populations, most notably the Cree, who were established in the Moose River region prior to the arrival of Europeans. Records contain missionary accounts of daily life in the north and focus on clergy members' involvement in the community, their family life, administrative matters between the church and the HBC—Diocesan property was leased from the company initially—, trapping and hunting statistics, as well as the basic necessities for surviving the winter months; annual grocery and supply lists sent south are included. As the majority of the content was created by clergy, the records document a Eurocentric-Anglican perspective, although due to the substantial Aboriginal population in the James Bay Area, many of the records document changes to Aboriginal communities as a result of European contact. The fonds documents some of the earliest interactions between Anglican missionaries and First Nations, Inuit, and Métis populations, although records become more plentiful after the official creation of the Diocese of Moosonee in 1872. The records of various Bishops, Archdeacons, and clergy members illustrate the structure of the Anglican Church and the administrative interactions between the Diocese and the parishes that it oversees. Records also document the financial relationship between the Diocese of Moosonee and the CMS, the MSCC, and the Anglican Forward Movement. These associations provided financial support to Missionary Diocese of the Anglican Church.

Changes in the social, cultural, and economic fabric of the many communities that make up the Diocese of Moosonee are also evident within the records. Records track the movement of communities including: Albany's relocation to Kashechewan and Fort George's relocation to Chisasibi. The rise in industrial interest in the north, especially in hard rock mining, followed by

a boom in immigration to northern communities starting in the early half of the 20<sup>th</sup> Century are reflected in the growing demand for parishes across northern Ontario and western Quebec. The Diocesan administration also wrote about and considered other matters including: changes to provincial education systems, municipal power initiatives, transportation, agriculture, and many other Municipal, Provincial, and Federal issues. Records also document broad shifts in policy concerning Aboriginal populations from the signing of Treaty No. 9 in 1905 through the Indian Residential School era of the mid-20<sup>th</sup> Century, the period of Aboriginal emancipation starting in the 1960s, and the period of reconciliation in the early 21<sup>st</sup> Century.

The fonds consists of correspondence sent and received by clergy, including all Diocesan Bishops; meeting minutes from Diocesan Executives, Synods, and various other committees managed by the Diocese, as well as those meetings concerning individual parishes. Photographs depicting clergy, residents, towns, cities, cultural activities, hunting and fishing, religious ceremonies and celebrations, amongst many other activities, are included. Videotapes, as well as legal and financial records, missionary and Bishop's journals, diaries, and account books document the foundation of the Diocese and describe the relationship between the Diocese, its parishes, and the communities to which those parishes serve. The records inform us of the administrative functions of the Synod Office including: hiring clergy and overseeing matters of finance. These records also illustrate the different networking relationships between the Diocese and the General Synod, the Diocese and churches of other denominations, and the Diocese of Moosonee and other Anglican Dioceses. Moreover, the records give insight as to the daily existence and development of the many communities within Northern Ontario and north-western Quebec that make up the body of the Diocese of Moosonee. Liturgical records of individual parishes are not found in this fonds.

**Notes: Immediate source of acquisition:** Archbishop Caleb Lawrence of The Diocese of Moosonee deposited Diocesan records in 1996.

**Languages of material:** Some records are written in French, some in Cree syllabics.

**Availability of other formats:** Some of the records are available as electronic copies.

**Restrictions on access:** Restrictions on access applies to some records.

**Terms governing use and reproduction/publication:** Copyright Act regulations apply to the records. Due to the fragility of some records, reproduction restrictions apply to some records.

**Accruals:** Since 1996, accruals have been received on an annual basis. More accruals are expected.

**Finding Aid:** A detailed finding aid is available at the Laurentian University Archives.

**Related material:** Complimentary information can be found within the sixty-four (64) Diocese of Moosonee parish fonds (see individual Finding Aids if available) and P205 G.W. Walton fonds.

**Associated material:** The Diocese of the Arctic fonds, the Diocese of Keewatin fonds, and the MSCC fonds can be found at the General Synod of the Anglican Church of Canada Archives. The Anglican Diocese of Montreal archives, the Anglican Diocese of Algoma archives held at Algoma University, the Ecclesiastical Province of Rupert's Land Archives, the Diocese of Rupert's Land Archives, and the HBC Archives may also have associated material.